



# M E D I A   R E L E A S E

STATE OF TENNESSEE  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND INSURANCE

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## **STATE FIRE MARSHAL GIVES SAFETY TIPS ON HOW TO STAY WARM AND SAFE FROM FIRE**

### *Fatal Fires Often Caused by Alternative Heat Sources*

NASHVILLE, TN.- Tennessee Fire Marshal Paula Flowers wants to remind Tennesseans to keep safe and warm as the cold weather starts to set in across the State.

"The winter weather means that many people will begin to heat their homes with fireplaces, woodstoves and space heaters," said Flowers. "Cold weather months typically have a higher number of accidental fire injuries and deaths due to the use of these alternative heat sources."

These accidental fires can be reduced by following a few fire safety tips:

- The use of an alternate heat source of any kind is a fire risk. Make it a "house rule" to test your home smoke alarms before you use your space heater or fireplace. All smoke alarms should additionally be tested once a month. It could save your life.
- Space heaters need space. Never put a space heater within three feet of anything combustible, including furniture, bedding or aerosol cans. When buying a space heater, make sure it bears the mark of an independent testing lab, and look for devices with automatic shutoff features.
- Before you use your fireplace, make sure the chimney has been professionally cleaned to remove the buildup of combustible materials that accumulate inside the flue.
- Be sure any kerosene-fueled heating device is installed with proper ventilation. A portable kerosene heater must be filled only in a well-ventilated area, free of flame and other heat sources, and only when the device has cooled completely. Use only the type of kerosene specified by the manufacturer for that device, and never use gasoline instead of kerosene.
- Never leave a fire, space heater, or flame unattended.

Additionally, make sure that furniture, clothing, or other combustible materials are not located in front of permanently mounted heaters like those mounted in walls or baseboard heaters. In the event they turn on when temperatures go below the thermostat's set point, there will be no worry of the items catching fire.

For more information about the Tennessee State Fire Marshal's office, please visit [www.state.tn.us/commerce/sfm](http://www.state.tn.us/commerce/sfm).

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